

# **Attendance Policy**



## **Yohden Primary School**

**Academic Year**

**2023/24**

### Attendance key contact List

Name	Role	Contact details
Ellen Harrison	Head Teacher	0191 5863096 e.harrison200@yohdenschool.uk
Ellen Harrison	Designated senior leader with responsibility for attendance	0191 5863096 e.harrison200@yohdenschool.uk
Michaela Lowery	Deputy Head Teacher	0191 5863096 m.lowery202@yohdenschool.uk
Judith Foster	Attendance Officer/School Admin	0191 5863096 j.foster300@yohdenschool.uk

### Who in school can help if you are experiencing difficulty / require help and support:

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Ellen Harrison	Headteacher DSL	0191 5863096 e.harrison200@yohdenschool.uk
Michaela Lowery	Deputy Headteacher/SEND/CO/Mental Health	0191 5863096 m.lowery202@yohdenschool.uk
Holly Temple	Key Stage 1 Leader Deputy DSL	0191 5863096 h.temple424@yohdenschool.uk

### Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos

Yohden Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise their true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

## **Why is regular attendance so important?**

Being in school every day that it is open, is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development. There is a renewed national focus on maximising pupils' time in the classroom, as evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results.

### **Here's what the data shows:**

Pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment.

Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7% over the key stage, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard.

Pupils who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and maths GCSEs in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths.

Generally, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage at KS2 and KS4, the lower the level of attainment at the end of the key stage.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS2, 83.9% achieved the expected standard compared to 40.2% of pupils who were persistently absent.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS4, 83.7% achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths compared to 35.6% of pupils who were persistently absent

### **This policy is supported by our policies on:**

- Safeguarding
- Behaviour
- SEND

**The school and all partners will work together to:**

**EXPECT**

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



**MONITOR**

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



**LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND**

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



**FACILITATE SUPPORT**

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



**FORMALISE SUPPORT**

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



**ENFORCE**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

## **1. Expectations**

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our students is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

### **We will ensure that:**

- All students have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- Attendance is a priority across the school.
- Aspire to high standards on attendance.
- Students will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of other students.
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.

## **2. Attendance data**

At Yohden Primary School we rigorously analyse attendance data on a monthly basis to ensure children and families are identified early for targeted support. Cohort and specific group data is also looked at for emerging patterns of attendance in order to identify barriers and develop strategies.

Regular attendance concerns are alerted to both staff and senior leaders to ensure school can offer a swift response.

## **3. Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance**

When a pattern of attendance is identified, the school will look at individual cases to decide on the best course of action.

At the initial stage of the concern a letter will be sent to parents to make them aware of the pattern and concern and to provide details of the contact in school for support.

When an absence continues school will speak to parents either over the phone or face to face to listen and understand the barriers to attendance. Here plans can be agreed to help solve the problem together.

## **4. Facilitate support**

At Yohden Primary School we intend to support parents in removing the barriers to school attendance. This could include an Early Help assessment particularly if there are wider issues affecting attendance. School can also look at the wider support available ie school counsellor, parenting groups etc.

## **5. Formalise support**

The school is committed to reducing persistent absence. Where support is refused or has limited impact support will be formalised with support from the local authority. This may also lead to formalising support with a parenting contract.

## **6. Enforce**

Where all other support avenues have been exhausted and there is limited or no progress being made, attendance may be enforced through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the right of the child to an education.

### **General / frequently asked questions**

#### **When can children be absent from school?**

When you register your child at school, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends that school regularly.

This means that your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet; or
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school. In most circumstances, however, your child is required to attend another school temporarily during such absences.

These are the only circumstances where schools can permit your child to be absent.

#### **What do I need to do if my child needs to be absent from school for one of those reasons?**

You should contact their school as early as possible to explain why. If not, your child's school will contact you on the first morning of their absence to find out why.

All parents can request a 'leave of absence' for their child which gives them permission to be absent from school. Leaves of absence must be applied for before your child will be absent and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Your child's headteacher has the final say over whether to approve the request and how long your child can be absent.

Their decision will be made after considering the specific facts and circumstances behind your request.

## **Can I take my child on holiday during term time?**

Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid requesting leaves of absence for holidays unless it is unavoidable.

As leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that your child's headteacher will agree a leave of absence for a family holiday.

If permission is refused and you keep your child off school on the days requested, you are likely to be committing an offence and be issued a fixed penalty notice or be prosecuted by your local authority.

## **Attendance Procedures and Absence Processes**

### **Attendance and absence management**

#### **Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

In order to promote attendance and punctuality the school will celebrate the class with the best attendance during our weekly assembly. The class with the best attendance of the week is awarded extra playtime. Class attendance is also shared in the weekly newsletter. Further to this, any children who achieves 100% attendance over each term will receive a certificate. Attendance percentages will be shared with parents on a weekly basis on the school newsletter, at termly parents' meetings and also annual reports to parents will contain a record of individual pupils' attendance.

#### **Communication**

The school requests that all parents please remember to report and explain the reasons for absence and to make sure your contact and emergency contact details are up to date.

It is vital, that school can contact parents if their child becomes unwell during the school day or in order to discuss the reasons for absence.

The school will analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to, for example medical needs). If we have concerns regarding your child's attendance then we may contact you by phone, letter, invite you to a meeting or make a visit to your home.

As a parent you may identify concerns about school attendance early on if you have seen a change in your child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, please share your concerns with us and we can work together to ensure that school attendance doesn't ever need to decline. The quicker that concerns are shared, the quicker they can be resolved.

The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve attendance.

### **On the first day of absence**

If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home then school will send a text to parents reminding them to contact school. If no response is given a phone call home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why will be made.

School will also contact other family members on the school contact list to find out the whereabouts of the child. If school still does not receive an answer from parents via phone or email then two members of the school staff will make a call to the family home.

If there is still no answer from home school will contact the local authority to look at beginning the Child Missing in Education procedures.

Doctors and dentist's appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to.

### **Periods of extended absence**

If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received, the school will contact to verify the absence and take any relevant action in relation to assuring itself of the child's welfare.

Prompt

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

### **Absence authorisation**

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

### **Punctuality:**

Registration time is at 8.45am after which point the pupil entry gates will be locked and all pupils must enter by the main entrance. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives in school up to 30 minutes after this time then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point and any children arriving more than 30 minutes late will be



recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to more formal action being considered).

**If your child is late for school:**

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance data base (SIMs).

**If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions parents will be contacted to discuss barriers and support that can be given to improve punctuality.**

**If lateness becomes persistent** with no identifiable reason and/or support has limited impact more formal action will be considered in conjunction with the local authority.

**If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality this may result in school contacting children's services.**

**Help & Support**

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you contact school about the issues as soon as possible. The quicker we know what the problem is, the quicker that we can work together to solve it and put a plan together which will meet your child's needs and ensure your child can benefit from all that school has to offer. Where needed we can also involve other services to make sure that your child and your family gets the right support, at the right time from the right people.

**Leave of Absence in Term Time**

Head teachers are only able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually; taking into account the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

**Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.**

## **Pupils with specific needs**

The needs of individual children and families are applied fairly and consistently to help deal with individual barriers to attendance.

During the development and implementation of the policy, obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child have been considered.

## **Children Missing from Education**

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Please see key contact list and details at the start of this document.

All staff and leaders at Yohden Primary School understand that attendance is everyone's responsibility.

School will:

- Ensure that all children receive good teaching and learning experiences to encourage children to attend school.
- Monitor attendance effectively.
- Raise awareness of attendance through assemblies, newsletters, parent meetings, individual end of year reports and Class Dojo.
- Ensure school offers a welcoming and positive atmosphere that enables children to feel safe.
- Reward high attendance.
- Discuss appropriate strategies to tackle poor attendance with children and parents on an individual basis.
- Report attendance to the local authority and the DfE